

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 49690

SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7147

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, IT

SUBJECT: MAAG/DAO REALIGNMENT

FOR SECRETARIES KISSINGER AND SCHLESINGER FROM  
AMBASSADOR VOLPE

1. I HAVE NOTED WITH CONSIDERABLE INTEREST THE ONGOING DEFENSE ACTION (ASD/ISA MEMO TO CJCS, DATED DECEMBER 21, 1973) DESIGNED TO ESTABLISH A SINGLE RESPONSIBLE DOD POINT OF INTERFACE/COORDINATION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES. I FULLY CONCUR IN THIS PRINCIPLE AND HAVE BEEN THINKING FOR SOME TIME OF HOW THIS OBJECTIVE MIGHT BE ACHIEVED, IN COMBINATION WITH A REDUCTION OF US MILITARY PERSONNEL AND EXPENSES, HERE IN ITALY. I BELIEVE THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY MERGING THE CURRENT FUNCTIONS OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP INTO A SOMEWHAT EXPANDED DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE.

2. I SHOULD HASTEN TO ADD THAT I HAVE COME TO THIS CONCLUSION NOT OUT OF ANY DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE MAAG'S PERSONNEL. THEY HAVE FULLY MET ALL THE RESPONSIBILITIES LEVIED ON THEM DURING MY TENURE IN ROME. RATHER, I BELIEVE THE SUGGESTED MERGER WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE OVERALL EFFICIENCY OF THE MISSION NOT ONLY IN DEALING WITH U.S. COMMANDS IN ITALY BUT ALSO IN OUR RELATIONS WITH ITALIAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES. WHILE THE DESIGNATION OF A SENIOR DEFENSE REPRESENTATIVE AS ENVISIONED BY THE AFOREMENTIONED ISA  
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MEMORANDUM WOULD RESULT IN GREATER EFFICIENCY, IT WOULD NOT

SOLVE ALL OUR PROBLEMS, NOR WOULD IT RESULT IN ANY PERSONNEL OR DOLLAR SAVINGS. UNDER THE PRESENT ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, THE CHIEF MAAG, AS CINCEUR CONTACT OFFICER, HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREAT MAJORITY OF FUNCTIONS RELATED TO COMMON PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND OTHER LOCAL PROBLEM AREAS. THE EXCEPTIONS TO THIS, WHEN U.S. COMMANDS CHOOSE TO WORK THROUGH THE ATTACHE OFFICE, WOULD THEORETICALLY BE ELIMINATED BY THE DESIGNATION OF THE MAAG CHIEF AS SENIOR DEFENSE REPRESENTATIVE. HOWEVER, THE ITALIAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES FREQUENTLY LOOK TO THE ATTACHES AS THE U.S. MILITARY OFFICIALS ACCREDITED TO THE ITALIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. INDEED, THEY HAVE ON OCCASION INSISTED ON DEALING SOLELY WITH THE DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE ON SUCH SUBJECTS AS HIGH LEVEL U.S. VISITORS.

3. IN ADDITION, AND BASIC TO MY PROPOSAL IS HOW WE MIGHT ACHIEVE GREATER DOLLAR SAVINGS. AT PRESENT THE MAAG COMPLEMENT INCLUDES A TOTAL OF 17 PERSONNEL ( 14 U.S. -- INCLUDING ONE ENLISTED AIDE TO THE CHIEF MAAG--AND 3 LOCAL NATIONALS). ITS FORMAL FUNCTIONS, LIKE THOSE OF MOST OTHER EUROPEAN MAAGS, ARE RELATED TO MAP EQUIPMENT, MILITARY SALES, REPRESENTATION, AND MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS PERFORMED UNDER THE RUBRIC OF CINCEUR CONTACT OFFICE. I FORESEE NO DIFFICULTY IN TRANSFERRING THESE FUNCTIONS TO AN EXPANDED DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE. WHILE I HAVE NOT EXAMINED IN DEPTH THE PERSONNEL SAVINGS THAT WOULD RESULT FROM COMBINING THE TWO OFFICES, I WOULD EXPECT THAT AT LEAST 50 PER CENT OF THE CURRENT MAAG STRENGTH COULD BE ELIMINATED. A PRECISE DETERMINATION WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT A POSITION BY POSITION ANALYSIS, PRESUMABLY BY AN EXPERT DOD TEAM, IN THE LIGHT OF A NUMBER OF VARIABLES, INCLUDING THE INTERMEDIATE AND LONG TERM POTENTIAL FOR ITALIAN MILITARY PURCHASES FROM THE U.S. AND WHAT THE PROGNOSIS IS FOR SELLING TO THE ITALIANS THE RESIDUAL RIGHTS TO OUR GRANT AID MATERIAL.

4. I FULLY APPRECIATE THE ARGUMENT THAT WILL BE ADVANCED AGAINST THIS PROPOSITION, I.E. IT IS UNWISE TO MIX SALES AND INTELLIGENCE FUNCTIONS. ON THIS QUESTION, I AM CONVINCED THAT OUR SALES POSSIBILITIES WOULD IN FACT BE ENHANCED IF THIS FUNCTION WERE MADE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE -- THE OFFICE DIRECTLY CHARGED WITH MONITORING THE ITALIAN

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DEFENSE POSTURE. I DO NOT BELIEVE DAO'S INTELLIGENCE RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED, SINCE I WOULD ENVISION THE SALES AND INTELLIGENCE FUNCTIONS AS BEING MAINTAINED AS DISCRETE FUNCTIONS WITHIN THE COMBINED OFFICE. I MIGHT ADD THAT A NUMBER OF OTHER MAJOR EMBASSIES IN ROME HAVE COMBINED THESE FUNCTIONS WITH NO ILL EFFECT.

5. ANOTHER OBJECTION THAT MIGHT BE RAISED AGAINST THE MERGER

CONCERNS THE MATTER OF CONTRIBUTED CURRENCY. AT PRESENT, THE ITALIANS REIMBURSE US FOR ALL MAAG EXPENSES EXCEPT BASIC SALARIES. THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE MAAG, ONE MIGHT ARGUE, WOULD RISK LOSING THIS REIMBURSEMENT. THE MUTAL DEFENSE AGREEMENT OF JANUARY 27, 1950 SPEAKS ONLY OF "...ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURES WITHIN ITALY IN CONNECTION WITH ASSISTANCE FURNISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY UNDER THIS AGREEMENT". I BELIEVE THAT AN EXPANDED DAO PERFORMING ALL THE CURRENT SECURITY ASSISTANCE-RELATED AND SALES FUNCTIONS WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR ITALIAN CONTRIBUTED CURRENCY, WHICH WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED AS A RESULT OF DECREASED SECURITY ASSISTANCE-RELATED PERSONNEL AND THE ELIMINATION OF REIMBURSEMENT FOR RENTAL OF MAAG OFFICE SPACE SINCE WE WOULD PLAN TO HOUSE THE COMBINED OFFICE TOTALLY WITHIN THE CHANCERY. (THIS ASSUMES THAT THE ITALIANS ARE STILL IN FACT LIABLE TO REIMBURSE US, GIVEN THE CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES SINCE 1950.) IN THIS CONNECTION, INFORMAL SOUNDINGS WITH THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE INDICATE THEY WOULD NOT RAISE THE CONTRIBUTED CURRENCY QUESTION IF THE MERGER WERE APPROVED.

6. I HAVE CONSIDERED THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE RANK SHOULD BE OF THE DEFENSE ATTACHE AFTER THE PROPOSED MERGER. RETAINING A GENERAL/FLAG OFFICER BILLET IN ROME HAS CERTAIN ADVANTAGES VIS A VIS OUR ITALIAN MILITARY FRIENDS. IT WOULD OBVIATE ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THEY WOULD CONSTRUCT OUR REORGANIZATION AS A DOWNGRADING OF US INTEREST IN ITALIAN MILITARY AFFAIRS. ON THE OTHER HAND, A FIRST RATE O-6 LEVEL COULD HANDLE THE JOB AND, I AM CERTAIN, SECURE THE NECESSARY ACCESS TO THE KEY OFFICERS IN THE ITALIAN MILITARY HIERARCHY. ALSO, IT WOULD SAVE THE US MILITARY ONE GENERAL/FLAG OFFICER SLOT AT A TIME, WHEN, IF MY REPORTS ARE CORRECT, THE SERVICES ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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ENGAGED IN A PROGRAM OF REDUCING THESE BILLETS. I DO NOT HAVE A HARD AND FAST POSITION ON THIS POINT AND WOULD WELCOME YOUR VIEWS.

7. ON THE TIMING OF THE PROPOSED MERGER, I WOULD WANT TO MINIMIZE PERSONAL HARDSHIP TO THE PERSONNEL INVOLVED, SPECIFICALLY THE PROBLEM OF CUTTING SHORT THE TOURS OF THE US INCUMBENTS OF THE POSITIONS THAT WOULD BE ABOLISHED. HENCE, I WOULD BE WILLING TO HAVE THE MERGER DELAYED UNTIL THE END OF THE TOUR OF THE CURRENT MAAG CHIEF -- LATE IN CALENDAR YEAR 1975.

8. I EXPECT TO BE IN WASHINGTON EARLY IN JUNE AND WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THIS PROPOSAL FURTHER AT THAT TIME. VOLPE

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